

Example Implementation Plan for a new MSc

Programme Directors are primarily responsible for making operational preparations for the launch of a new programme, co-ordinating with other relevant roles and functions. Creating a clear implementation plan, setting a schedule of what needs to be done when, is a requirement for new award-bearing programmes, and strongly encouraged for all other courses.

This appendix gives outline suggestions for what should be included in such a plan, using the model of a new MSc programme (with indicative timing for a September programme start date). These points, and associated timing are necessarily general; individual plans will need to be carefully developed for each new programme, and may vary from what is suggested below. Following such a plan should help ensure the programme launches and runs successfully.

- *Acronyms: DL = Distance Learning; EB = Exam Board; EBC = Exam Board Chair; F2F = face-to-face; FPGTC = Faculty Postgraduate Taught Committee; HoF = Head of Faculty; MO = Module Organiser; PA = Programme Administrator; PC = Programme Committee; PD = Programme Director (for proposed new programme); PDoE = Pro-Director of Education; TPD = Taught Programme Director; TSO = Teaching Support Office; UoLW = University of London Worldwide (for DL programmes).*

Task	Involved/responsible	Timing
<p>Implementation plan prepared and circulated directly after programme has been formally approved. This may already have been developed as part of the approval process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PD and PA should keep the implementation plan up-to-date throughout the period up to launch of the programme, marking items as complete or adjusting timing if things change – and alerting others about such changes where necessary. 	PD (+PA)	May, 16 months prior to launch
<p>Prospectus and webpages updated to include the new programme. May need to act quickly to ensure details are included in hardcopy prospectus.</p>	Registry (+UoLW Registry for DL) – PD liaising	May-June, 16 months prior to launch

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<p>Academic development initiated – PD coordinating work by relevant academic staff (whose contributions have been agreed by HoFs) on programme materials and curriculum content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be crucial where new modules need to be developed for a new programme. Formal nomination of key academics as Module Organisers may be appropriate. • When to start this may vary depending on how much work is involved and who is appointed and available to do it – but it is always better to start planning such work from as early as possible, and highlight where significant work may be required, e.g. for an area where appropriate textbooks may not already exist. • Such work will link in to any work on learning technology. 	<p>PD, MOs, key academics (+TPD advice)</p>	<p>May-June and onwards, 16 months prior to launch</p>
<p>Marketing activities initiated specifically for the new programme. PD should liaise closely with relevant Registry/Marketing staff about tailoring these activities to the target market and discipline – e.g. production of a leaflet/brochure, mailshots, adverts in relevant professional journals/media, conference attendance, etc.</p>	<p>Registry (+UoLW Registry for DL) – PD liaising</p>	<p>June-July and onwards, 15 months prior to launch</p>
<p>Recruitment processes put in place, i.e. Registry systems capable of accepting and processing applications, academic staff nominated to review any applications (this will usually be PD plus one or two other key academics involved in the programme, with TPD assigning responsibilities). Academic staff may need training in recruitment processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual applications may not start coming through until later, e.g. from perhaps 9 months prior to launch; but systems should be set up well before then, especially if there may be an initial strong wave of interest. 	<p>Registry (+UoLW Registry for DL), PD and TPD</p>	<p>July-August and onwards, 14 months prior to launch</p>
<p>Learning Technology development initiated, with PD asking the Technology Enhanced Learning team to schedule in work for the programme, e.g. to develop interactive and multimedia materials for delivery online or via CD-ROM. This is likely to be a requirement for DL programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work involved may be significant and should not be underestimated; it will always be better to start planning from as early as possible. Work scheduling may need negotiation. Approved programme proposals should have budgeted for such work and any recruitment of staff for an appropriate period. 	<p>PD, Technology Enhanced Learning team</p>	<p>July-August and onwards, 14 months prior to launch</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This should link in to work on academic development. 		
<p>Staffing requirements should have been assessed as part of the approved programme proposal; but a review of current plans and staffing expectations for the programme as a whole (including modules, especially new modules) should be conducted ahead of main preparations ramping up. This should help set an initial allocation for which current staff should work on which areas of the programme when it launches; and determine where recruitment of specific new staff (especially teaching staff) would be necessary, following up accordingly to ensure they are in post in time.</p>	<p>TPD, HoF, PD, MOs</p>	<p>January, 8 months prior to launch</p>
<p>Programme Administrator formally nominated/appointed by relevant Section Head and Programme/Team Manager in TSO or DL Office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PA may typically be an experienced current member of TSO or DLO staff whose responsibilities have been re-assigned, rather than a new recruit; though potentially with new staff having been recruited to fill the former role of the re-assigned PA. 	<p>H-TSO or H-DLO</p>	<p>March, 6 months prior to launch</p>
<p>Module Organisers for new modules should be formally appointed in good time before module materials are finalised, if they have not been appointed already (i.e. at the stage when curriculum development work was being assigned).</p>	<p>PD, TPD, MOs, HoF</p>	<p>April, 5 months prior to launch</p>
<p>Programme specification and module option details updated based on any key developments in the year since the programme specification was originally approved; with module choice options updated where necessary if affected by any agreed LSHTM-wide module slot or timetable changes for the following academic year. Changes should be signed off as per programme amendment procedures, varying accordingly to the type/depth of change.</p>	<p>PD (and PA)</p>	<p>May-June, 4 months prior to launch</p>
<p>Pre-registration information for students who have been offered a place should be developed by the PD, working with the relevant Registry and PA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will draw strongly on standard LSHTM information maintained by the Registry, but with programme-specific information such as a PD welcome letter, pre-arrival reading lists etc. being provided by the PD. Information should usually be made available to students (e.g. on Registry 'pre-registration' pages) two to three months before the start of the programme. 	<p>PD, Registry (and PA)</p>	<p>May-June, 4 months prior to launch</p>

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<p>The Programme Committee (full membership) formally established several months ahead of the programme launching. A schedule of meetings should be set for the first year, and circulated to all members to include in their diaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is good practice for the PC to hold a first meeting at this point, as an opportunity for all members to familiarise themselves with the way the programme will be set up and operate, and agree an initial division of responsibilities for activities like final review of materials, orientation support, tutoring etc. 	PD, TPD, PC	May-June, 4 months prior to launch
<p>Rooms booked both for general F2F programme activities (e.g. orientation, reading week, project sessions) and teaching and seminars for new F2F modules. It is vital to do this well in advance as otherwise desired rooms may be booked out. The PD and MOs should advise on requirements.</p>	PA (+advice from PD, MOs)	June, 3 months prior to launch
<p>Exam Board Chair formally appointed before all programme materials are finalised. Typically this will be a senior academic who has been involved in programme development and has been expecting to take on the EBC role – nominated by HoF for approval by PDoE (as Chair's Action for SPGTC), on advice of PD and TPD. Note: the full Exam Board does not need to be formally appointed until the start of the academic year.</p>	PDoE (+PD, TPD, HoF)	June, 3 months prior to launch
<p>Drafting of start-of-session materials begun – including welcome pack, orientation timetable and programme handbook. These will all be based on standard LSHTM templates or skeleton versions. Starting as early as possible will be desirable.</p>	PA, PD	June-July, 3 months prior to launch
<p>Recruitment of new staff may typically happen in the months just prior to programme launch.</p>	TPD, HoF (+PD, MOs)	June-July, 3 months prior to launch
<p>Assessment information in all programme materials (programme and module specifications, actual tasks developed for modules, guidance about exams and projects etc.) checked for consistency by the Exam Board Chair – ensuring that it is appropriate and in line with the basis on which the programme was approved.</p>	EBC	July-August, 2 months prior to launch
<p>Module registration opened for new DL programmes – liaising with UoLW Registry to release final module specifications and allowing accepted applicants to sign up for specific modules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that this works differently for DL than F2F. 	PD/MOs/DL Office liaising with UoLW Registry	August, 1 month prior to launch [for DL]

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<p>Start-of-session materials finalised – including welcome pack, orientation timetable and programme handbook. PD should specifically check and sign these off (may delegate elements of checking to others). PA then organises printing of any hardcopies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For DL programmes, liaison with UoLW functions will be necessary – and finalisation of materials will typically need to happen earlier than for F2F programmes. 	<p>PD, PA</p>	<p>August, 1 month prior to launch; or earlier – e.g. July – for DL programmes</p>
<p>Comprehensive programme materials finalised – including module handbooks and readers, project. PD and/or relevant MOs should specifically check and sign these off (may delegate elements of checking to others). PA then organises printing of any hardcopies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For DL programmes, liaison with UoLW functions will be necessary – and finalisation of materials will typically need to happen earlier than for F2F programmes. For new F2F modules that will not commence until later in the year, while the module specification should be finalised by now (to guide student choice from start of year), detailed module content may not need to be finalised until later, ahead of module start. 	<p>PD, MOs, PA</p>	<p>August, 1 month prior to launch; but earlier – e.g. July – for DL programmes; or later in year for material required later</p>
<p>Relevant VLE information, including electronic copies of finalised materials, should be prepared and posted on the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) shortly ahead of the programme launching. The PD may advise on what to include.</p>	<p>PA (+advice from PD)</p>	<p>September, ahead of launch</p>
<p>Exam Board (full membership) formally appointed – by PDoE, as Chair’s Action for SPGTC – around the beginning of the academic year. This will include appointment of an External Examiner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is good practice for the Board to hold a first informal meeting before any assessments take place, as an opportunity for all members – potentially including the External – to familiarise themselves with the way the programme is set up and expected to be assessed, and start discussing assessment tasks and exam question-setting etc. Dates for formal Exam Board meetings to take place for the coming academic year should be set and circulated to all members to include in their diaries. 	<p>EBC, PDoE, EB</p>	<p>Start of academic year</p>

Further 'standard' activities expected to take place during the year will usually include –

- Orientation (including specific programme activities, as well as registration and fee payment)
- Students being given access to email, network, VLE after registration
- Module fair, and students making module choices [note, for DL this is done ahead of start of year]
- Allocation of personal tutors [F2F only]
- Election of student reps
- Termly programme committee meetings
- Term 1 progress tests held where appropriate [for F2F programmes]
- Collecting student feedback (on modules, and the programme as a whole)
- Exam question-setting (starting from an early stage in the year)
- Finalisation and release of project handbook
- Holding project guidance sessions at programme level
- Appointing project supervisors
- Approving student project proposals (CARE forms).
- Conducting exams and assessments
- Co-ordinating marking of exams and assessments, return of feedback to students, moderation of grades, and support for final Exam Boards
- Marking projects
- Preparing annual reports – module Annual Monitoring Report and Action Plans, Annual Programme Director's Review report, including responses to student feedback and External Examiner report